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SIPDIS

USTR FOR NED SAUMS; CAIRO ALSO FOR FAS ASIF CHAUDRY

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SUBJECT: BIOS ON NEW CABINET MEMBERS

1. (U) King Abdullah and Prime Minister Abul Ragheb reshuffled the Cabinet on September 26 adding 4 new members to the Cabinet, and reassigning one Cabinet member to a new portfolio. Para 2 contains biographical data on the new ministers.

2. (U) New members of the Cabinet are:

A. (U) Minister of National Economy: Samer al-Tawil

Muslim, East Banker. Al-Tawil was born in Damascus in 1967, obtained a BS in economics and accounting from the University of Jordan in 1988, and an International Legal Accounting Certificate from Illinois University. Al-Tawil has a private sector background in trade and oil services, but earlier this year, he was appointed Secretary General for the Ministry of Trade and Industry. He is also a member of the board of directors at the Arab Bank, the Jordan Refinery Company, and the Export Development Corporation.

B. (U) Minister of Social Development: Dr. Ruwaida Ma'ita.

Muslim, East Banker. Dr. Ma'ita, born in Kerak in 1955, obtained a MS in Public Health from Tulane University and a PhD in Public and International Health from Louisiana University. She served as a health and social development consultant to HRH Princess Muna before her appointment this year as President of the al-Hashimiyeh University.

C. (U) Minister of Higher Education: Mohammad Hamdan.

Muslim, West Banker. Hamdan was born in Jaffa in 1934 and has a long history of involvement in education. He received his PhD in Mathematics from Sydney University in 1963 and held several University positions, including Professor at the American University in Beirut, and Dean and President of Yarmouk University. He has previously held the Minister of Higher Education position under PM Badran in 1989 and PM Majali in 1998. He was appointed Secretary General of the Higher Council for Science and Technology in September 1998.

D. (U) Minister of Agriculture: Turad al-Fayez.

Muslim, East Banker. Al-Fayez, born in Amman in 1941, has a long history of service in the GOJ, though not necessarily in the field of Agriculture. He holds a BS in Political Science from the University of Oklahoma. He has served in both the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Ministry, where he held several Ambassadorships, including to Bahrain, Lebanon, and Egypt. He has also served as Jordan's Permanent Representative to the Arab League. His most recent appointment was to the Senate, in November 2001.

E. (U) Minister of Health: Dr. Walid Maani.

Muslim, East Banker. Ma'ani was appointed Minister of Higher Education during the last Cabinet reshuffle in January 2002. He has now been re-appointed as Minister of Health. Ma'ani was born in 1946 and received his MD in 1969 and a diploma in general surgery in 1970 from Alexandria University in Egypt. Ma'ani established the Department of Neurosurgery at the Faculty of Medicine and the University of Jordan Hospital in 1977, and has been head of that department since then. He had been president of the University of Jordan since 1998 before taking on his duties as Minister of Higher Education earlier this year. Ma'ani has published more than 20 original articles in international medical research journals and has been a member on several scientific committees, including the Jordanian Neurosciences Society and the Society of British Neurosurgeons. He was recently elected as a member of the board of directors for the Jordan-American Commission for Education Exchange (Fulbright). Ma'ani was behind the creation of the American Studies Master's Program--the only such program in the region--at Jordan University. In meetings with Embassy officials, Ma'ani has expressed great respect for U.S. educational, cultural, and medical programs.

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